

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF ENGLISH CLUB AS AN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY ON EFL STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of English Club participation on the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in the English Education Study Program at the Muhammadiyah University of Palu. Employing a causative-correlational design with quantitative methods, data were gathered from 17 students using questionnaires to measure club participation and documentation of final speaking grades. Data analysis utilized Pearson's Product Moment and a t-test to determine the significance of the correlation. The results indicate a positive but very weak correlation ($r = 0.093$), suggesting that the English Club has a limited impact on students' speaking performance. Furthermore, the t-test revealed that $t_{counted} (0.361) < t_{table} (1.753)$, confirming that the correlation is not statistically significant. These findings suggest that while participation provides a slight positive trend, its overall effect is minimal, necessitating a more structured approach to club activities and the consideration of other influential factors such as motivation and vocabulary.

Keywords: English Club, speaking skills, EFL students, extracurricular activity.

BACKGROUND

English is the language of global unity used to communicate written and orally in various parts of the world. The language connects many fields of countries, such as economics, cultures, religion, and education. Many literatures are written in English to enable the world community to understand it (Ly, 2022). It makes English essential to be learned formally or informally.

In Indonesia, English is introduced and taught from elementary to high level of formal education (Kurniati et al., 2021). There are four main skills taught in English. They are speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Every skill has difficulties when learned, especially speaking skills.

According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017), speaking skills is recognized as one of the most difficult parts of language learning. Many language learners struggle to

express themselves verbally. Speaking skill is one of the main abilities that must be mastered in language learning. Through language, learners can canalize their ideas and thoughts and communicate well with other people.

Furthermore, for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, especially in English education study program, mastering speaking skills is necessary. Daring to speak English is not easy. Students experience many difficulties before speaking or expressing their ideas.

Two factors generally trigger difficulties in speaking. They are internal and external factors (Rahmaniah & Asbah, 2019). An example of an internal factors is a lack of motivation to learn English from them. In comparison examples of external factor are family backgrounds and unsupportive learning environments. In

many cases, these matters become obstacles for students to master speaking. Furthermore, Rahayu in Yusa (2021) found that many problems stem from internal and external causes such as a lack of comprehension of structure, vocabulary, and pronunciation, a lack of motivation and chances, a lack of practice and discipline, and environmental variables. They also have psychological issues, such as a lack of motivation. There are several ways to improve speaking skills in English. Some of the strategies are, getting support and motivation to learn from those closest to us, taking extracurricular activities related to English outside or inside the campus, taking private English lessons, and as often as possible practicing and using English in daily conversation with classmates and other speaking partners, or actively joining English Club.

English club is a positive place to practice and improve the four basic English skills, especially speaking skill (Holandyah et al., 2023). English club is an extracurricular activity at the Muhammadiyah University of Palu, especially in English education study program. This activity is held once a week and hoped that many students would come to gain knowledge together. In the English club, students are given a topic. Then, they are given time to understand the topic and speak it. The students are allowed to speak English without any score for their speaking. Much new knowledge can be obtained while joining the English club. However, despite these structured activities and lofty goals, the reality on the ground paints a different picture.

Although, in theory, the English Club is designed as an ideal informal environment for improving speaking skills through enjoyable and collaborative practice (Sheokarah & Pillay, 2021), the reality on the ground reveals a significant gap. Initial observations at Muhammadiyah University of Palu revealed a contradictory

phenomenon. The researchers found that some students who rarely attended the English Club were actually able to adapt quickly when given assignments, understood the speakers well, and had satisfactory pronunciation. Conversely, there were a number of students who regularly attended the activities but whose speaking skills still showed no significant improvement. Interestingly, although they felt more confident after joining the club, that confidence did not always correlate with an improvement in their academic grades in the Speaking course. It is this gap between active participation, self-confidence, and actual competency achievement that underlies the urgency of this study.

The phenomena explained raise the curiosity of the researcher. The researcher wants to find out how English Club affect students speaking skill. The investigation is entitled "*Assessing the Impact of English Club as an Extracurricular Activity on EFL Students' Speaking Skills*"

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Nature of Speaking Skill

Speaking is fundamentally the ability to orally communicate and express ideas, thoughts, knowledge, and emotions effectively to others. According to Yuriza (2014), it involves the productive use of language to verbally convey one's thoughts, suggestions, and feelings. Complementing this, Yanti (2021) defines speaking as the dynamic process of generating and transmitting meaning through both vocal and nonverbal symbols. Speaking occupies a central role in language acquisition, supported by its emphasis in modern communicative language teaching methodologies, where instruction prioritizes developing students' fluency and confidence in self-expression. Ultimately, proficient oral communication reflects a speaker's mastery in structuring discourse for clear audience comprehension, underscoring its

relevance to real-world interactive contexts like extracurricular language practice.

The Importance of Speaking in English Learning

Success across diverse professional, academic, and social domains critically relies on effective verbal dialogue and conversational proficiency. With English firmly entrenched as the global lingua franca, facilitating over 1.5 billion speakers worldwide, it is indispensable for cross-cultural and international interactions. Among the four core language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), speaking stands out as paramount in second/foreign language acquisition, as it uniquely demands spontaneous integration of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural pragmatics in real-time, fostering fluency, confidence, and authentic communication essential for practical success.

Indeed, many language learners assess their proficiency based on their speaking ability (Ahmed, 2024), with successful second language (L2) speakers demonstrating fluency and accuracy through coherent speech, correct pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary (Duong & Suppasetsee, 2024). This emphasis on speaking proficiency underscores its role as the ultimate measure of communicative competence, enabling learners to navigate real-world interactions where the ability to engage in spontaneous conversations determines perceived mastery of the language (Agustina et al., 2022; Sayed et al., 2024). Moreover, in professional and academic arenas, strong oral skills facilitate career success and cross-cultural collaboration, as employers prioritize candidates who can articulate ideas fluently and persuasively in English (Adiantika & Purnomo, 2018; Islam & Stapa, 2021). Thus, prioritizing speaking development equips learners with the confidence and versatility needed for global participation.

The Concept and Benefits of English Club

An English club provides a vital extracurricular platform for language learners to practice English speaking skills in a relaxed, informal setting that contrasts sharply with the rigid structure of formal classrooms, thereby addressing key challenges in spontaneous oral communication (Duong & Suppasetsee, 2024; Sayed et al., 2024). Research by Zulhermindra (2018) substantiates that active involvement in English clubs delivers multifaceted benefits, including significantly improved cooperation and communication abilities, essential for effective speaking proficiency (Agustina et al., 2022; Ahmed, 2024), cultivation of innovation and creativity in language expression, and the fostering of self-directed learning critical for sustained language development. Moreover, these clubs create an engaging, enjoyable atmosphere that promotes positive speaking habits, reduces anxiety associated with formal settings, and facilitates social networking through authentic interactions, ultimately enhancing overall communicative competence (Adiantika & Purnomo, 2018; Islam & Stapa, 2021).

Potential Disadvantages of English Club

Despite its advantages, English clubs also encounter significant challenges that can undermine their effectiveness in enhancing speaking skills. According to Galanes and Adams, as cited in Baihaqiqi (2016), key disadvantages include members failing to pay full attention to speakers, a persistent lack of enthusiasm despite engaging materials, and students feeling bored or sluggish, leading to minimal active participation. These issues often reflect broader EFL speaking difficulties, such as psychological barriers requiring courage and preparation for spontaneous communication and the demanding nature of developing

fluency amid anxiety and low confidence. (Catur et al., 2023; Leyaley, 2023). To mitigate them effectively, organizers should foster accountability through interactive tasks and varied activities, while participants maintain focused attention during sessions, thereby maximizing the club's potential.

METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

Research Design

This study employs a causative correlational design, ideal for ethically examining the strength, direction, and significance of associations between naturally occurring variables like English club participation (independent variable) and students' speaking skills (dependent variable) in real-world EFL contexts, without the need for manipulation or random assignment (Agustina et al., 2022; Ginosyan et al., 2019). This approach allows for the statistical quantification of the relationship between involvement in extracurricular English language activities and observed improvements in oral proficiency (Raghdah et al., 2025).

Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of EFL students from the 2021 academic cohort in Muhammadiyah University of Palu. Using purposive sampling, 17 active EFL students, who regularly participated in the university's English club, were selected as the sample. This sample size is appropriate for causative correlational research in EFL contexts, as demonstrated by similar studies employing small cohorts (e.g., $n=13$) to quantify relationships between extracurricular activities and speaking proficiency without compromising statistical analysis via tools like Pearson's correlation (Ginosyan et al., 2019).

Data Collection Instruments

To obtain accurate data, the researcher used two types of instruments:

- 1) Questionnaire: Used to measure the frequency of attendance and the level of student participation in English Club activities (Variable X). This questionnaire consists of 14 statements on a four-point scale (always, often, sometimes, and rarely).
- 2) Documentation: Used to obtain secondary data in the form of students' final grades in the *Speaking* course (Variable Y), obtained directly from the course instructor.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was then statistically analyzed using two tests:

- 1) Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation: Used to calculate the correlation coefficient (r_{xy}) to determine the strength of the relationship between English Club activities and students' speaking skills. The formula used is:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

- 2) t-test: Conducted to test the research hypothesis and determine whether the found correlation is statistically significant or not at a specific significance level. Data analysis was performed using Microsoft Excel 2010.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study was conducted in the English Language Education Program at Muhammadiyah University of Palu, involving 17 active students from the 2021 academic cohort. Questionnaire data was collected to measure the students' level of participation in English Club activities. Data on speaking proficiency was obtained from the final grades for the *Speaking* course, as provided by the course instructor.

Descriptive Results of Variables

English Club Participation (Variable X) - Based on the results of the questionnaire, which consisted of 14 statements, the following picture of student participation emerged:

- The highest student score was 82 and the lowest was 53 out of a maximum total score of 84.
- A total of 58.83% of students stated that the English Club consistently had a positive impact on their English language skills.
- Regarding psychological aspects, more than half of the respondents (about 58%) often to always felt more confident in speaking English after joining the club.
- The majority of students (70.58%) rated the learning atmosphere in the English Club as very enjoyable and considered it an adequate place to learn.

Students' Speaking Skill (Variable Y) - The final grades for students in the Speaking course are distributed as follows:

- 8 students (47%) received a score of 85.
- 5 students (29%) received a score of 80.
- 2 students (12%) received a score of 70.
- 2 students (12%) received a score of 60.

Statistical Analysis and Hypothesis

Testing

Correlation Analysis - A correlation analysis was conducted using the Pearson Product Moment formula to determine the relationship between participation in the English Club (X) and speaking ability (Y).

Statistics	Scores
Correlation Coefficient (r_{xy})	0.093
Correlation Level	Very low

The calculation results show that $r_{xy} = 0.093$. Based on the interpretation table, this value indicates a positive relationship between the

two variables, but with a very weak or low level of strength.

Hypothesis Testing (t-test) - To test the significance of this relationship, a t-test was conducted with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ and degrees of freedom ($df = 15 (N - 2)$).

- t-count value: 0.361
- t-table value: 1.753

Since t-counted (0.361) < t-table (1.753), then H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected. This indicates that the correlation between English Club participation and students' speaking ability is not statistically significant.

Regression Analysis and Predictive Power

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the extent to which variable X contributes to variable Y. As a result, it is found:

- Coefficient of Determination (R^2): A value of 0.009 was obtained, meaning the English Club contributes only 0.9% to students' speaking ability. The remaining 99.1% is influenced by other factors outside the scope of this study.
- ANOVA Test: Shows a significance value of 0.721 ($p > 0.05$), confirming that this regression model is not statistically significant.
- Regression Equation:

$$Y = 71.117 + 0.109X$$

The equation above indicates that each one-unit increase in participation in the English Club is predicted to increase the speaking ability score by 0.109 points.

Discussion

This study aims to investigate the effect of the *English Club* on the speaking skills of EFL students in Muhammadiyah University of Palu. Based on the results of statistical analysis, it was found that the correlation coefficient (r) of 0.093 falls into the very low category. The results of the hypothesis test also reinforce this finding, where the t-

counted value (0.361) is smaller than the t-table value (1.753), leading to the conclusion that there is no statistically significant effect between participation in the English Club and students' speaking ability.

This finding indicates a gap between the theory regarding the benefits of informal learning media and the reality of students' academic achievement. Theoretically, the English Club is viewed as a platform offering a relaxed environment that fosters collaboration, communication, and self-directed learning. However, the coefficient of determination (R^2) in this study indicates that the English Club variable contributes only 0.9% to speaking ability. This indicates that 99.1% of students' speaking ability is influenced by factors outside the scope of this study's variables.

Further analysis of the questionnaire data yields interesting findings. Although its statistical influence is low, the majority of students hold a positive perception of the English Club. As many as 58% of students feel more confident, and approximately 70% consider the club's atmosphere to be very enjoyable. This discrepancy between increased self-confidence and academic performance can be explained by the theory proposed by Galanes and Adams in Baihaqiqi (2016), which states that while beneficial, language clubs also face obstacles such as a lack of enthusiasm for the material or boredom, which can hinder full participation.

Furthermore, this low level of significance aligns with the findings of Hia et al. (2016), who revealed that although students' perceptions of language clubs are positive, their speaking ability can still be categorized as low if the frequency of daily practice remains very minimal. Internal factors such as a lack of mastery of vocabulary and grammar also serve as major obstacles for students in transforming their self-confidence into linguistically proficient speaking performance.

Research data also indicates an anomaly where students who rarely attend the club actually achieve high academic scores (85/100), while some students who always attend receive lower scores (60/100). This reinforces the argument that speaking ability is a complex skill requiring the integration of theoretical understanding and sustained practice, as emphasized by Harmer (2007). In the context of this study, students' academic achievement appears to be more influenced by self-directed learning initiatives or exposure to English outside of club activities.

These results have important implications: the existence of a language club alone is insufficient to guarantee improvements in speaking ability unless it is accompanied by more interactive material management and monitoring of students' consistent practice in a broader environment.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is no significant effect of participation in the English Club on the speaking skills of EFL students in Muhammadiyah University of Palu. Statistical analysis showed a positive but very weak correlation ($r_{xy} = 0.093$), with hypothesis test results indicating that t_{counted} (0.361) was smaller than t_{table} (1.753), thus accepting the null hypothesis (H_0). Although students provided positive testimonials regarding increased self-confidence and a pleasant club atmosphere, these psychological benefits did not contribute significantly to improvements in their academic grades in the Speaking course. These findings indicate that the English Club contributes only 0.9% to speaking ability, while the remaining 99.1% is influenced by factors outside the scope of this study.

Suggestion

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed. For future researchers, it is recommended to expand the sample size and use more objective assessment instruments, such as standardized speaking tests (direct oral rubrics), rather than relying solely on final grades documented by instructors. Additionally, future research should explore other variables that may influence speaking ability, such as speaking anxiety and specific teaching strategies. For English Club administrators, it is recommended to continue and improve the quality of the program by integrating more structured, student-centered activities, such as debates, role-playing, or storytelling sessions guided by experienced mentors to maximize learning outcomes. And the last, for students, they need to realize that developing speaking skills requires active and consistent effort that goes beyond participation in the club, including self-directed learning initiatives and daily practice with peers.

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